

CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE
ON DISARMAMENT

ENDC/PV.350
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FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 23 November 1967, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Alhaji SULE KOLO

(Nigeria)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Brazil:

Mr. A. da COSTA GUIMARAES

Mr. J. NOGUEIRA FILHO

Bulgaria:

Mr. K. CHRISTOV

Mr. B. KONSTANTINOV

Mr. T. DAMIANOV

Burma:

U KYAW MIN

Canada:

Mr. A.G. CAMPBELL

Mr. J.R. MORDEN

Mr. A. BERNIER

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. P. WINKLER

Mr. V. VAJNAR

Mr. J. STRUCKA

Ethiopia:

Mr. A. ZELLEKE

Mr. B. ASSFAW

India:

Mr. N. KRISHNAN

Mr. K.P. JAIN

Italy:

Mr. R. CARACCILO

Mr. G.P. TOZZOLI

Mr. F. SORO

Mexico:

Mr. J. CASTANEDA

Miss E. AGUIRRE

Nigeria:

Alhaji SULE KOLO

Mr. B.O. TONWE

Poland:

Mr. A. CZARKOWSKI

Mr. E. STANIEWSKI

Romania:

Mr. N. ECOBESCO
Mr. O. IONESCO
Mr. C. GEORGESCO
Mr. A. COROIANU

Sweden:

Mr. A. EDELSTAM
Mr. R. BOMAN

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN
Mr. R.M. TIMERBAIEV
Mr. V.V. SHUSTOV
Mr. V.B. TOULINOV

United Arab Republic:

Mr. O. SIRRY
Mr. M. SHAKER

United Kingdom:

Sir Harold BEELEY
Mr. I.F. PORTER
Mr. D. MOSS

United States of America:

Mr. W.C. FOSTER
Mr. S. DePALMA
Mr. C.G. BREAM
Mr. R.W. DREXLER

Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. D. PROTITCH

1. The CHAIRMAN (Nigeria): I declare open the 350th plenary meeting of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

2. Sir Harold BEELEY (United Kingdom): I have asked for the floor today in order to introduce formally on behalf of the United Kingdom delegation a suggested amendment to article V, paragraph 3 of the draft treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (ENDC/192, 193). That is the paragraph relating to the review conference. The effect of the amendment would be to make it clear that the matters dealt with in the preamble as well as in the operative articles of the treaty were to be subject to review after five years.

3. As amended, the paragraph would read as follows:

"3. Five years after the entry into force of this Treaty, a conference of Parties to the Treaty shall be held in Geneva, Switzerland, in order to review the operation of this Treaty with a view to assuring that the purposes of the Preamble and the provisions of the Treaty are being realised."

I believe that that amendment is at present being circulated as a Conference document.^{1/} My colleagues will recall that the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Mulley, suggested that amendment in the course of his statement to the Committee on 10 October (ENDC/PV.337, para. 52).

4. Other proposals to achieve the same purpose have been made by other delegations, proposals which involve a repeating in or transferring to the body of the treaty undertakings which are already expressed in the preamble. In particular, there have been proposals for an article in the treaty under which the nuclear-weapon States parties to the treaty would commit themselves to pursue negotiations with a view to reaching agreement on further measures of disarmament. I should like to make it clear that the suggested amendment we are introducing today is not intended to prejudice in any way consideration of those other proposals. Our amendment and the others to which I refer are not, in our view, mutually exclusive. We hope that they will be considered together as contributions to the completion of a generally-accepted

^{1/} Circulated as document ENDC/203.

(Sir Harold Beeley, United Kingdom)

treaty. The United Kingdom delegation shares with the sponsors of those amendments the desire to see, in Mr. Mulley's words ---

"...firmer commitments from the nuclear Powers to follow this treaty with immediate and meaningful negotiations to secure further measures of arms control and disarmament". (ibid.)

5. Mr. CARACCILO (Italy) (translation from French): In its statement of 24 October the Italian delegation put forward certain considerations on the duration of the non-proliferation treaty, and stressed in particular (ENDC/PV.341, paras. 10-12) that, in the interests of the treaty and its credibility, the concept of unlimited duration contained in the present draft (ENDC/192, 193) must be reconciled with that of a pure and simple term. Today I should like to revert briefly to this important question and to define more precisely the ideas underlying the Italian proposal to amend the draft treaty (ENDC/200/Rev.1).

6. Everyone knows that the aim of the non-proliferation treaty is to avert an extremely serious threat to the whole of mankind: the indiscriminate spread of nuclear weapons. We have a sufficiently clear idea of the dangers connected with this threat to induce us to make every possible effort to reduce and, if possible, eliminate them. Unfortunately that does not apply to all the alternative solutions, both political and technological, which the future may have in store.

7. Thus the Committee finds itself charged with the particularly delicate and complex task of drawing up an instrument that could forestall any development likely to entail unpredictable consequences. On the other hand, we must not hinder the parties to the treaty from coping with the new conditions which will inevitably result from scientific progress and the changing international situation.

8. To that end the Italian delegation, wishing to define clearly once again the idea it put forward on 24 October, considers that the best method would be to provide that upon the expiry of a period of X years the treaty should be prolonged for a similar term, and so forth. The renewal of the treaty for an indefinite period upon the expiry of the first term would in fact have the following dangerous consequences. First, the treaty, after the initial period, would cease to be a

(Mr. Caracciolo, Italy)

valid instrument capable of inducing the nuclear Powers to make fresh efforts to achieve the objectives of disarmament. Secondly, countries which are more technologically advanced and might not be entirely satisfied with the achievements in nuclear disarmament would be the more easily tempted to take this unique opportunity to withdraw from the treaty before renewing their earlier commitments.

9. Therefore, in order to ensure that the largest possible number of countries shall accede to the non-proliferation treaty in a spirit of sincerity and conviction, its article VII, paragraph 1 should be re-drafted as follows:

"The present treaty shall have a duration of X years. It shall be automatically extended for terms equal to its initial duration for those governments which, subject to six months' notice, shall not have made known their intention to withdraw."

10. Some delegations, quite understandably, might point out that in regard to the requirements I have just mentioned there already exists in the second paragraph of the same article a clause on the right to withdraw. Under that clause any party to the treaty may decide that extraordinary events related to the subject matter of the treaty have jeopardized its supreme interests, and in that case may withdraw from the treaty after giving three months' notice. In that connexion I would point out that the clause regarding the right to withdraw, which appears in the second paragraph of article VII, is undoubtedly based on the need, which seems logical, to enable each country to cope with unexpected and exceptionally grave situations. I consider, however, that recourse by a signatory State to this right would be a dramatic move, because a whole series of withdrawals by other signatory countries might well follow.

11. On the contrary, a very different situation would be brought about by providing for the possibility of withdrawal coinciding with the ends of the treaty's terms. In the first place, such a situation, if it existed, would actually be the most effective inducement to the nuclear Powers to take increasingly effective and wide-ranging measures for nuclear disarmament, without which measures the non-proliferation treaty would become useless; in the second place, as the end of each term drew near there would be plenty of time to study and endeavour to meet any complaints put forward by the parties, so as to avert their use of the right to withdraw.

(Mr. Caracciolo, Italy)

12. As the Italian delegation has repeatedly stated, and as the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs affirmed in his recent address to the Senate:

"Very few governments have shown as much solicitude and fervour as the Italian Government in searching for initiatives calculated to promote the conclusion of an agreement and to encourage efforts to overcome the difficulties."

I should now like to dwell briefly on the latest of these initiatives: the one set forth and explained by Mr. Fanfani in this Palais on 1 August last (ENDC/PV.318). As the Committee will certainly recall, the proposal consisted in requesting the nuclear Powers to supply the parties to the treaty with fissile material for peaceful purposes, in application of a specific disarmament measure and within the context of aid to the developing countries for their economic and social progress.

13. In connexion with that proposal we have been informed of the constructive reactions of the governments of various countries which have understood the true spirit of an initiative aimed at facilitating the conclusion of a non-proliferation agreement. The Italian delegation has hitherto refrained from reverting to that problem, in order to avoid any interference in the first phase of the debate which opened with the presentation of the United States and Soviet draft treaties. Nevertheless, it intends to put forward its proposal in due course and in the appropriate circumstances.

14. However, since the Committee will be obliged to present a balance-sheet of its work to the United Nations General Assembly, the Italian delegation considers it useful to recall once again its proposal of 1 August. Considering, furthermore, that that proposal might constitute an important element for the debate in the General Assembly, my delegation would like to recommend its insertion in the report which the Committee will submit to the United Nations, in accordance with its terms of reference, on the work accomplished during the present session.

15. Obviously, if we wish to enable the United Nations General Assembly to express a considered and well-founded judgement on our work, we must present it with a picture as complete and constructive as possible of the various proposals which have been submitted in order to improve the draft treaty. It will therefore have to be informed of the amendments which have been submitted by various delegations in a constructive spirit with the object of completing an agreement of such capital importance for the future of mankind.

(Mr. Caracciolo, Italy)

16. The Italian delegation believes that the various proposals for amendment submitted by all the parties, without exception, deserve to be carefully examined and discussed, regardless of the support, more or less substantial, that they have received during our meetings. A case in point -- the most recent -- is the amendment just submitted by the United Kingdom representative (ENDC/203) to link the tasks of the quinquennial conference with the objectives laid down in the preamble to the treaty, an amendment which Italy supports wholeheartedly. This proposal, like others which I will not quote in order not to be too lengthy, testifies beyond all possible doubt to the seriousness and perseverance with which the Committee is fulfilling the tasks assigned to it. These proposals also contribute usefully towards making the agreement on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons that instrument of security and détente which is everywhere desired.

17. In conclusion, permit me to reaffirm a profound conviction of the Italian delegation. The more account the non-proliferation treaty takes of the various States' legitimate requirements, of which the amendments so far proposed constitute an important part, the more each party to the treaty will be disposed to give priority to the advantages which will derive therefrom for the international community as a whole and for each of its members, and to accept the inevitable burdens which that implies. Without under-estimating the duties laid upon the co-Chairmen, we consider that the aim of this treaty is too important for peace and collaboration between peoples for us to risk not achieving it through failing to take advantage of the proposals submitted by the various delegations.

18. That is the constructive spirit which has always guided the Italian delegation in its activities and in which I have deemed it my duty to speak today; for I am convinced that our work must end in the presentation to the United Nations General Assembly of a draft treaty calculated to obtain the largest number of sincere accessions and helping to guarantee true achievement of the objectives of peace and co-operation which mankind expects from it.

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué:

"The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament today held its 350th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador Alhaji Sule Kolo, representative of Nigeria.

"Statements were made by the representatives of the United Kingdom and Italy.

"The delegation of the United Kingdom tabled an amendment to the third paragraph of article V of the draft treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (ENDC/203).

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 28 November 1967, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

